



F-35 Lightning II Program

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F-35B TEST PILOTS START CERTIFYING FOR INITIAL SHIP TRIALS

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – With flight envelope expansion for ship trials completed, four F-35B test pilots started expeditionary airfield (EAF) building up to field carrier landing practice (FCLP) Sept. 14.

EAF and FCLP testing is part of the pilot certification process for landing aircraft on an amphibious deck, to ensure pilots are adequately prepared for the inherent danger in operating aircraft in a maritime environment.

Four test pilots are scheduled to participate in initial ship trials, all with significant short take-off and vertical landing experience in the F-35B.

“The initial ship trials will demonstrate our ability to operate the F-35B as the Corps needs it – in the expeditionary environment,” said Marine Corps Col. Roger Cordell, military site director for F-35 testing at Naval Air Station Patuxent River. “We’re excited about the potential that the F-35B has shown to operate in the demanding environment at sea.”



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Photo credit: Lockheed Martin

The first ship trial on board USS Wasp (LHD 1) for the F-35B is on track for this fall, and is scheduled to test the first short take-offs, vertical landings, deck handling, landing systems as well as provide an opportunity to collect deck environmental data.

The F-35B is the variant of the Joint Strike Fighter for the U.S. Marine Corps, capable of short take-offs and vertical landings for use on amphibious ships or expeditionary airfields to provide air power to the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. The F-35B is undergoing test and evaluation at NAS Patuxent River prior to delivery to the fleet.